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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
24 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 76
(As of 1630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATIONGENERAL

(All times cited in military paragraphs are Cairo/
Tel Aviv time, unless otherwise specified.)

1. A dramatic call from President Sadat for US and Soviet troops to enforce Israeli compliance with the cease-fire came at the end of a day in which Israeli communiques and press briefings portrayed continued fighting in the southern canal area as the result of Egyptian efforts to break through Israeli lines.

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3. Units of the Egyptian Third Army on the east bank launched attacks toward the Gidi and Mitla Passes this afternoon and also attempted to link up with

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Second Army units to the north. An Israeli military spokesman claims that these attacks have been halted, but admits Egyptian forces made some gains. Israeli spokesmen claimed that Egyptian forces also attempted to reopen the Cairo to Suez road and establish a bridgehead to the east bank, but said their forces had stopped this attack as well. The Israelis characterized the attacks as having been ordered by the Egyptian high command and not undertaken on the initiative of local commanders.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

4. Egyptian forces on both sides of the canal in the southern sector launched a coordinated counter-

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7. At about 1330, an hour before the reported ground attacks, some 28 Egyptian aircraft attacked Israeli positions, according to the spokesman. Tel Aviv claims to have shot down 14 of the attacking planes.

8. The Israeli officer cited what he claimed was a copy of captured orders from the commander of Egyptian armed forces to the commander of the Third Army. The orders directed that two brigades of the Third Army's 4th Division were to attack Israeli forces on the west bank at 1345 today. The Israeli officer concluded that this document together with the apparently coordinated air and ground attacks indicate that the Egyptian high command in Cairo was responsible for the operation.

9. The reported Egyptian attacks were at odds with the Israeli estimate made earlier today that the Egyptians' east bank forces had only a limited capacity for offensive action. The Israelis were at a loss to explain the reported Egyptian attacks eastward into the Sinai, and observed that the dispersion of Third Army forces over a wide area left them vulnerable to Israeli counterattacks unless a cease-fire were established quickly. The Israelis explained the west bank attacks in terms of an Egyptian effort to break through from the west in order to establish a bridgehead through which the east bank forces could be supplied; the same explanation was given for the fighting in and around Suez City throughout the day.

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11. Egyptian ground force units continue to fight within the Israeli enclave on the west bank. At 1400

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SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY

18. The disposition of the Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean has not been significantly changed over the past 24 hours.

19. Another amphibious ship has entered the Mediterranean, this one from the Atlantic. This ship is normally deployed off Conakry, Guinea on a contingency basis. It will probably continue eastward in the Mediterranean, possibly to join with the amphibious ship currently in Tunisia's Gulf of Hammamet.

20. The major Soviet combatant ships continue to shadow US Sixth Fleet ships from anchorages at Kithira and Crete East. A Riga class destroyer escort from the Black Sea joined this force early on 24 October.

21. Further east, four destroyers and two mine-sweepers remain in the area northeast of Cyprus.

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~~The Soviets also issued~~
an official government statement on 23 October that
accused Israel of violating the cease-fire and threat-
ened Tel Aviv with the "gravest consequences" if it
did not stop its "aggression."

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UNITED NATIONS

25. The Security Council is scheduled to meet this evening to hear Egyptian complaints of alleged Israeli cease-fire violations. Radio Cairo has already publicized President Sadat's request that US and Soviet troops enforce the truce, which his UN delegate is to present tonight. The use of Soviet and American truce police teams had been informally discussed in UN circles earlier in the week, but was abandoned when China made vehement objections. Tel Aviv is also likely to oppose any use of Soviet observer or enforcement teams.

26. Egypt and Israel are maneuvering for territorial and diplomatic advantages in the deployment of UN truce observers along their ill-defined fronts. Apparently dismayed by the progress Israel was making on the ground, Egypt began pressing the UN Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) early yesterday to

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POWs

30. Red Cross officials in Geneva have been urging the Egyptians and Syrians to publish a list of all Israeli prisoners of war that they hold, threatening to publicize the situation if the two countries do not comply. While Israel has submitted a list of nearly 1,000 Arab POWs, Syria has sent in no figures and Egypt has admitted to holding only 46 Israeli captives. Tel Aviv has notified the Red Cross that 400 to 600 missing Israeli soldiers may be in enemy hands. Red Cross officials reportedly are hoping that the Soviet Union will exert pressure on the Arabs to cooperate.

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FEDAYEEN

32. The US Embassy in Beirut today notes indecision on the part of fedayeen spokesmen on how to reconcile their public rejection of the cease-fire resolution with the knowledge that they must maintain good relations with their Arab supporters who have accepted it. Lebanese leftists and pro-fedayeen press commentators are not directly attacking the cease-fire, but are glorifying those who have rejected it. In calling for a continuation of the "struggle" rather than "war," the fedayeen may now be moderating their position--or at least disguising it--to guarantee their continued support from such Arab benefactors as Egypt and Syria.

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establish stations along the cease-fire line. This morning Cairo continued to urge rapid installation of observers without waiting for negotiations with the Israelis. Egypt, supported by the Soviets, has made several inquiries as to why UNTSO is not moving more quickly. Egypt also requested this morning that UNTSO seek out entrapped Egyptian forces and secure their escape. UNTSO referred this request to New York with the comment that such a job is well beyond their capabilities.

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27. Israel is urging prompt installation of observers along the farthest extent of their penetration on the west bank, but delaying efforts to establish stations along the perimeter of Egyptian east bank enclaves. Defense Minister Dayan has agreed to six west bank observation posts, but only one opposite Port Said on the east bank. Dayan flatly refused to permit mobile observation teams--such as would be used to free entrapped Egyptian troops--to proceed to the battle zone until there is an effective cease-fire.

28. It is not yet clear whether Tel Aviv intends the current demarcations to be final, but Egypt can be expected to object to these arrangements on the grounds that they would reward Israeli "expansionism." Cairo is likely to insist, at the least, that the foremost points of its east bank enclaves be treated as a cease-fire line.

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USSR-CHINA

33. A TASS commentary today accuses China of trying to prevent a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis and of using the conflict to aggravate the international situation. Peking's refusal to take part in the voting at the UN is cited as well as a general campaign of anti-Sovietism aimed at instilling distrust in Moscow's peace policy. Peking also is charged with attempting to drive a wedge between the Soviets and the Arab world and is ridiculed for the lack of assistance it has provided the Arabs. China is reminded that an enemy with sophisticated weapons cannot be beaten by "firing paper shells." No Moscow commentary on the continued fighting in the Suez Canal area has been noted today.

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